Japanese
Fairy Tale Series
No 17

SCHIPPEITARO

Translated by Mrs T. H. James

版權所有
COPYRIGHT RESERVED

日本昔噺第十七號
竹篦太郎
明治廿一年十二月一日印刷
同　年同月七日發行

東京市四谷區本村町三十八番地
發行者　長谷川武次郎

英國人
英譯者　ジヨイムス夫人

東京市四谷區重箱町廿八番地
印刷者　金子德次郎

Published by T. Hasegawa, 38 Yotsuya Hommura, Tokyo

PREFACE.

The following story has been current in all parts of Japan from ancient times. Slightly different versions exist in different provinces but the most widely known is the one here given.

The picture of the dog on another page is a copy of one now issued from Mitsumine or Mitakesan to the faithful who reverence it as Okuchishinjin, the large mouthed god, to serve as a charm to keep away devils and thieves. The original was no doubt something like the dog Shippeitaro.

Should the children who read this book ever visit Japan they might see it pasted up above the door, on the outside, of some house even yet.

Digitized by Microsoft®

Digitized by Microsoft®

竹篦太郎
大明神

SCHIPPEITARO.

LONG long ago, in the days of fairies and giants, ogres and dragons, valiant knights and distressed damsels; in those good old days, a brave youug warrior went out into the wide world in search of adventures.

For some time he went on without meeting with anything out of the common, but at length, after

Digitized by Microsoft®

journeying through a thick forest, he found himself, one evening, on a wild and lonely mountain side. No village was in sight, no cottage, not even the hut of a charcoal burner, so often to be found on the outskirts of the forest. He had been following a faint and much overgrown path, but at length even that was lost sight of. Twilight was coming on, and in vain he strove to recover the lost track. Each effort seemed only to entangle him more hopelessly in the briars and tall grasses which grew thickly

on all sides. Faint and weary he stumbled on in the fast gathering darkness, until suddenly he came upon a little temple, deserted and half ruined, but which still contained a shrine. Here at least was shelter from the chilly dews, and here he resolved to pass the night. Food he had none, but wrapped in his mantle, and with his good sword by his side, he lay down, and was soon fast asleep.

Towards midnight he was awakened by a dreadful noise. At first he thought it must be a dream, but

the noise continued, the whole place resounding with the most terrible shrieks and yells. The young warrior raised himself cautiously, and seizing his sword, looked through a hole in the ruined wall. He beheld a strange and awful sight. A troop of hideous cats were engaged in a wild and horrible dance their yells meanwhile echoing through the night. Mingled with their unearthly cries the young warrior could clearly distinguish the words. "Tell it not to Schippeitaro! Keep it close and dark! Tell it not to

Schippeiraro!"
A beautiful
clear full moon
shed its light upon this
grewsome scene,
which the

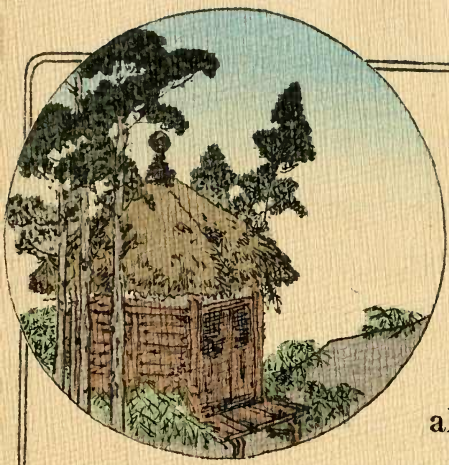
young warrior watched with amazement and horror. Suddenly, the midnight hour being passed, the phantom

Digitized by Microsoft®

cats disappeared, and all was silence once more. The rest of the night passed undisturbed, and the young warrior slept soundly until morning. When he awoke the sun was already up, and he hastened to leave the scene of last night's adventure. By the bright morning light he presently discovered traces of a path which the evening before had been invisible. This he followed, and found to his great joy, that it led, not as he had feared to the forest through which he had come the day before, but in the opposite

Digitized by Microsoft®

direction, towards an open plain. There he saw one or two scattered cottages, and, a little further on, a village. Pressed by hunger, he was making the best of his way towards the village, when he heard the tones of a woman's voice loud in lamentation and entreaty. No sooner did these sounds of distress reach the warrior's ears, than his hunger was forgotten, and he hurried on to the nearest cottage to find out what was the matter, and if he could give any help. The people listend to his questions, and shaking



their heads sorrowfully, told him that all help was vain. "Every year," said they, "the mountain spirit claims a victim. The time has come, and this very night will he devour our loveliest maiden.

This is the cause of the wailing and lamentation." And when the young warrior, filled with wonder, enquired further, they told him that at sunset the victim would be put into a sort of cage, carried to that very ruined temple

where he had passed the night, and there left alone. In the morning she would have vanished. So it was each year, and so it would be now: there was nohelp for it. As he listened, the young warrior was filled with an earnest desire to deliver the maiden. And, the mention of the ruined shrine having brought back to his mind the adventure of the night before, he asked the people whether they had ever heard the name of Schippeitaro, and who and what he was. "Schippeitaro is a strong and beautiful dog" was the

Digitized by Microsoft®

reply, "he belongs to the head man of our Prince who lives only a little way from here." "We often see him following his master, he is a fine brave fellow." The young

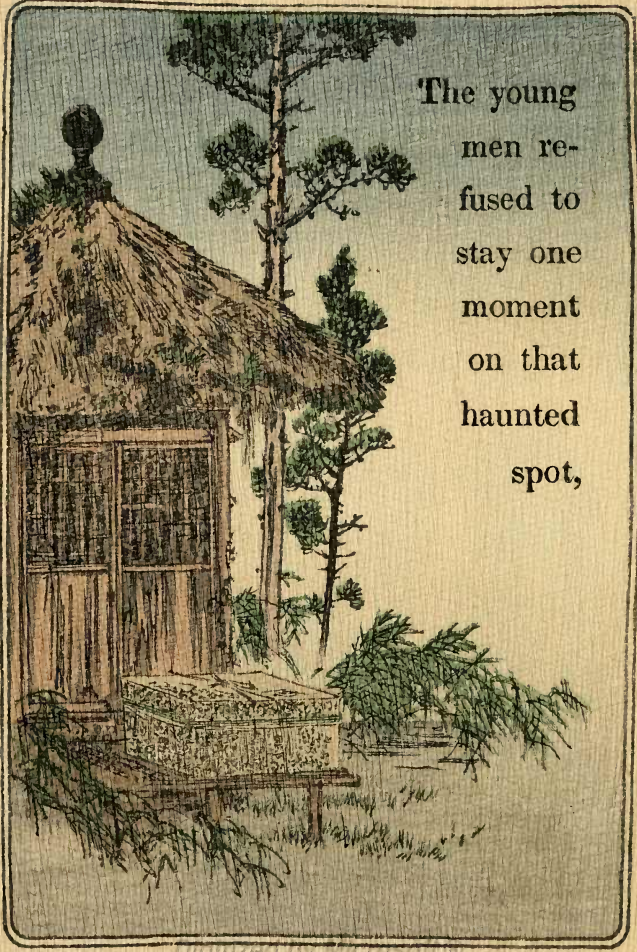
Digitized by Microsoft®

knight did not stop to ask more questions, but hurried off to Schippeitaro's master and begged him to lend his dog for one night. At first the man was unwilling, but at length agreed to lend Schippeitaro on conditon tha the should be brought back the next day. Overjoyed the young warrior led the dog away.

Next he went to see the parents of the unhappy maiden, and told them to keep her in the house and watch her carefully until his return. He then placed the dog Schippeitaro, in the cage which had been

Digitized by Microsoft®

prepared for the maiden; and, with the help of some of the young men of the village, carried it to the ruined temple, and there set it down.



The young men refused to stay one moment on that haunted spot,

Digitized by Microsoft®

but hurried down the mountain as if the whole troop of hobgoblins had been at their heels. The young warrior with no companion but the dog, remained to see what would happen.

At midnight when the full moon was high in the heaven, and shed

her light over the mountain, came the phantom cats once more. This time they had in their midst a huge black tom cat, fiercer and more terrible than all the rest, and which the

Digitized by Microsoft ®

young warrior had no difficulty, in knowing as the frightful mountain fiend himself. No sooner did this monster catch sight of the cage than he danced and sprang round it with yells of triumph and hideous joy, followed by his companions.

Digitized by Microsoft®

When he had long enough jeered at and taunted his victim, he threw open the door of the cage.

But this time he met his match. The brave Schippeitaro sprang upon him, and seizing him with his teeth, held him fast, while the young warrior with one stroke of his good sword laid the monster dead at his feet. As for the other cats, too much astonished to fly, they stood gazing at the dead body of their leader, and were made short work of by the knight and Schippeitaro. The young warrior brought back

the brave dog to to his master, with a thousand thanks, told the father and mother of the maiden that their daughter was free, and the people of the village that the fiend had claimed his last victim, and would trouble them no more. "You owe all this to the brave Schippeitaro," he said as he bade them farewell, and went his way in search of fresh adventures.

Digitized by Microsoft ®